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Period3

Final Essay treaty of Versailles

The ending of World War One was such an event that gave a feeling of good relief over the countries of Europe. The population of Europe were at sleep after so many years of fear and extreme hardship. However following these emotions of happiness, soon anger was expressed towards the countries which were seen as responsible for starting the Great War. The Paris Peace conference was an event which took place in the palace of Versailles. The conference was held over 12 months, 1919-1920, and intended to solve the disputes throughout Europe and relieve some of the anger. In this period of time, five main peace treaties were established. However the uttermost vital of the treaties was that of Versailles as it dealt with Germany. "Nothing less depends upon this decision, nothing less than the liberation and salvation of the world." Woodrow Wilson, speaking in September 1919 referring to the treaty of Versailles. The treaties were drawn up by the victorious allied leaders. These leaders represented the three super powers most affected by this costly war. Georges Clemenceau stood for France, Woodrow Wilson spoke for the United States and David Lloyd George represented Great Britain. Each leader had their own opinion regarding how the defeated countries should be punished. Clemenceau was the only Prime Minister seemingly intent on destroying the Triple Alliance powers out of hatred.

> David Lloyd George is often referred to as the middle man. His views fell between those of Clemenceau and those of Wilson. He was under big pressure from the public to punish Germany. Yet at the same time he believed he should not punish Germany too harshly. He saw this action as disastrous for future peace, for Germany would seek revenge in the near future if the treaty was too harsh. "We want a peace which will be just, but not vindictive. We want a stern peace because the occasion demands it, but severity must be designed, not for vengeance but for justice. Above all we want to protect the future against a repetition of the horrors of this war". Woodrow Wilson's aims were seen as building a better and more peaceful world from the ruins of the Great War. Wilson believed the treaty of Versailles should punish Germany but not so harshly that it would someday recover and seek revenge. However Wilson's main aims were portrayed> through his fourteen points. But perhaps his main goal for post war Europe was to strengthen democracy in Germany so the citizens would not let its leaders cause another war. France suffered enormous damage in WW1. When the war ended the general population of France wanted revenge on Germany. Clemenceau saw the Versailles treaty as a way of crippling Germany. To punish it so harshly so that Germany would never again be a threat to France. Woodrow Wilson's 14 points No secret treaties, free navigation / trade, removal of economic barriers, disarmament, problem of colonisation, self determination and the creation of peace keeping organization. All of which

As the countries negotiated the terms of the treaty they discovered they each had conflicting ideas surrounding the reparations and wording of the treaty. Clemenceau resented Wilson's generous attitude towards Germany and Lloyd George's desire to not treat Germany too harshly. He said "if they British are so anxious to appease Germany they should look overseas and produce colonial, naval or commercial concessions". These disagreements left the large three unsatisfied and ultimately left them with a weak mere shadow of a perhaps great treaty due to their own arrogance and. It contained many faults and weaknesses.

The treaty of Versailles greatly humiliated Germany forcing it to accept full responsibility for the war. Another fault in this treaty was that it did not work as intended. The idea that Germany could ever afford to pay the reparations to full amount was ludicrous as it was already suffering from the defeat of war. These reparations caused runaway inflation throughout Germany. But perhaps the largest predicament of all was that those who created it themselves did not enforce it.

The terms of the treaty were announced on May the 7th to a horrified German nation. It was to lose 10% of its land, all its overseas colonies, 12.5% of its population, 16% of its coal fields and almost 50% of its iron and steel industries. The treaty went on to forbid the German's from defending themselves by stripping away their right to an army. Along with the right to maintain an air force, Germany was also forbidden to ever own submarines, tanks, boarder guns, heavy fortifications, and heavy artillery. All of the precautions taken were to ensure the defeat of the German military and to prevent Germany from ever challenging the Allies again. The treaty also covered the subject of reparations. But perhaps worst of all it was forced to accept full blame for the war. The overall reaction of Germany was horror and outrage. They certainly did not feel they started the war and many still did not believe that they lost it. However William Carr said "Severe as the treaty of Versailles seemed to many Germans, it should be remembered that Germany might easily have fared much worse. If Clemenceau had got his way instead of being restrained by Britain and America the treaty could have been much worse for Germany".

Four other peace treaties were created to deal with Germany's allies. As each of these also failed to win the war they were all forced to disarm and to pay reparations. However these treaties terms and conditions differed greatly to those in the treaty of Versailles. These treaties unlike Versailles were not created by the huge three but by officers and diplomats and representatives of the nationalities in Eastern Europe except of course the defeated nations. These treaties dealt with such countries as Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. These treaties mainly focused on disarmament the sorting of various land of the defeated to the victors. Each of these countries were made to pay reparations but of nowhere near as high as the devastating £11.3 billion which was issued to Germany. As it has been shown above the terms issued to Turkey, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria were much less severe to those crippling terms forced upon Germany. This is of course because the huge three did not want another war like this to ever happen and they saw Germany as the biggest threat to the newly formed peace throughout Europe. However some historians believe the idea of this treaty bringing future peace to

Europe as being preposterous. The Treaty of Versailles was enacted into history in June 1919 with Germany forced to accept sole responsibility for causing World War I.

By signing the treaty, Germany took full responsibility for World War I, leaving them accountable for all damages. This would hold back the economy of Germany for years to come, leaving their country broken and shattered in a nimbus cloud of uncertainty. The German position on June 28th, 1919 was indefensible and vulnerable as the country's representatives were forced to bitterly sign the hated document of The Treaty of Versailles. Germany had come to Versailles with the expectations of receiving an offer of peace, a document to end the inhumane and vicious attacks that had encompassed the world since the beginning of the war in 1914. Instead, Germany was offered a document that demanded territory, weapons and military, and reparations that filled Germany with outrage and questions and a breakdown of nationalism throughout the country. The allies took full advantage of their vulnerability, leaving Germany no option but to be subjected to this treaty. The Allies striped Germany of all things valuable and implanted hatred and hostility throughout their country. An effective peace treaty would look at all aspects of its outlined conditions and should be well thought out with the future in mind of all countries concerned. Though peace and contentment throughout the world should have been the ideology behind a peace treaty, it was big three's arrogance, greed, and hostility that in fact determined the actual outcome of the Treaty of Versailles